

## Articles and Sermons :: Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west

Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/8/10 13:02

### Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ

by Paul West

Everything in life comes with a price. Being a Christian is no exception. In fact, being a true, born again follower of Jesus Christ will cost you everything. No other calling in life demands this. Walking with Jesus requires a lifetime of bloody spiritual combat where not only your own flesh strives to defeat you, but controlling spirits of wickedness attempt to assassinate you at every given opportunity.

Jesus told all His followers to expect persecution, rejection, arrests, temptations, betrayals, floggings and death. Can anyone name a more costly and self-sacrificial calling in life than this! We read of Stephen's stoning and James being put to the sword. We are told Paul was beheaded. The world today is at the zenith of ungodliness as the church of Jesus Christ pursues the American dream and enjoys a status-quo, persecution less lifestyle. But how is this possible? Is God is now offering Christianity at bargain prices? Is suffering for the gospel's sake a thing of the past?

With such reduced rates on Christianity's price tag, it's no wonder the church is in the weakened (and weekend) condition it's in. When any institution lowers its standards, devastation is sure to follow. But I wonder; have the rates really been reduced? Is God behind this massive reduction in costs, or is Christianity instead being sold by independent merchants ignorant of the true cost? When was the last time we really evaluated the cost of following Jesus as indicated from the scriptures?

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

How often do we inform sinners of this verse before we lead them into a prayer of reconciliation? We so eagerly tell them of the price Jesus paid on the cross, but we never mention the stipulation of payment on their part to be His disciple. They need to know the payment is high and lasts a lifetime.

If you've read the four gospels you've noticed that the promises of the Lord have conditionals frequently attached to them: "If" you abide in me; "If" you keep my commandments. Pay close attention to the word "if" in the words of Christ. We will benefit more from meditating on this little word than we will on anything else, because the keys to receiving the blessings of obedience are contained within it. Luke 14:26 says to me, "Paul, if you can't put me above your biological father and wife and children and make me the only true source of joy and lordship in your life, then you can not afford to be my disciple."

What an introductory offer! To be more blunt: Our wives, husbands, children, our very own lives must become as dung to win the knowledge of Christ. Christians all around the world are martyred daily as we sit insulated from their bloodshed here in North America. But being insulated doesn't alter the facts. I tell you this: the rates have not gone down. How many of us have figured this cost into our spiritual budget when we procured Christianity at the altar? In 1536, William Tyndale was strangled and his body burned at the stake for translating the New Testament into English. Today, Christians in China are still being beheaded. The rates have not gone down one cent.

"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

We live in an age where the church of Jesus Christ is the sickest, weakest and most worldly that it's ever been in history. God's children refuse to pick up their crosses and suffer loss for the gospel's sake, and as a result, great walls of vanity and strife are suffocating the church. Today, God's children cakewalk through life, meld into the world, dabble in the political arena, play the stock market, stage-dive at rock concerts and dance in seductive clothing on TV. Nowadays, if you're a Christian, it's all about feeling good and enjoying yourself while the world goes to hell. It's a "bless me" generation where success is an idol and Christian pop stars strive for top ten billboard ratings. Mention the cross and rejection and that's exactly what you'll get from your own brothers and sisters - rejection.

When Jesus said we must bear our crosses, He didn't mean on gold necklaces or as tattoos. Indeed, there is an enorm

ous price to be paid on a cross! The cross symbolizes forgiveness, but it also symbolizes pain, rejection and death. For the apostle Paul, the cross was the death sentence to his flesh, and likewise for me, the cross is the complete annihilation of the flesh and all self-centered motives, dreams, ambitions and desires that are contrary to the plan and purpose God has for my life.

"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

This was the answer the Lord gave to a potential follower who wanted first to say goodbye to his family. Can you imagine a preacher nowadays saying this to a newly excited "believer"? He would be slandered as a legalist, accused of hindering someone from following God! But again, we must use Jesus as our reference and not worldly etiquette and political correctness as our standard.

Jesus was so politically incorrect that He caused riots and divisions wherever He went! He brought whips into synagogues! His teachings and methods and statements caused furious uproars among the religious leaders who considered Him demon-possessed and insane. Even the crazed congregation of his hometown synagogue tried to throw Him off a cliff in the middle of a sermon! Never did Jesus tickle the ears of His listeners with promises of money and blessings as do so many preachers today. Jesus preached the opposite! Jesus promised rejection and prison and death! He commanded His disciples to "take no money bag" with them on their journeys. We've flipped everything around and turned Jesus into a genie in a bottle who has to obey the prayer of Jabez as we glide into heaven on magic carpets of our chosen denominations.

Actually, Jesus saw right into this man's heart and detected hesitation, doubt and unbelief. And with God, there can never be doubt. If I am going to get anywhere with God, then I must have my mind and heart set on Him as a flame of fire. "Once you take my yolk, Paul, there's no going back. If you're uneasy in following me this early on, if seeds of doubt have already begun to root in your heart and mind, then you're probably not fit for kingdom work. All who follow me must be unwavering flames of fire."

"How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24)

Jesus and the rich ruler. As rich as he was monetarily, the ruler was unable to pay the only price put forth by the Lord - his own life. The church of today would do good to wake up and realize there are no bargain prices, no haggling with God! His prices are set in incorruptible stone forever. The distorted "God is love" message preached in Christian churches today makes it seem like coming to Jesus is the easiest thing in the world. And coming to Jesus is easy, (if God grants repentance), but it's staying with Jesus that counts!

Nothing seems to be required today except a heart to believe. But remember, the demons believe...and tremble! Holiness and sanctification are not preached anymore under the anointing. Sermons on hell are all but outlawed in the pulpit. Why the deceitfulness of riches is not a popular topic to preach, considering Jesus said riches will prevent so many from entering into paradise, I have no idea. Since everyone wants to get to heaven, I would think this would be a very important topic! But again, we see where the church has stressed the opposite: blessings of prosperity and increase and gain and favor and advantage rule the day. These are the pulpit promises that lazy shepherds feed their greedy sheep with.

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19).

Ah, yes. The honor of being hated by the entire world! Only the school of Jesus Christ can offer this. Jesus Himself chooses the sheep out of the world and promises them the ultimate tuition price: world hatred. Did I say being a Christian is expensive? It will cost you the world and everything in it! How many are willing to pay this price! Jesus said that many try but few would actually succeed; many start to build, but few actually complete the tower.

How precious is the pearl of Jesus Christ to you? Are you willing to pay anything and everything for it? Would you pay for it with your own blood? With your family's blood? Would you forsake the world and all its gold and music and media and sensualities for a wooden cross of self-denial and a lifetime of rejection and warring against the flesh? Have you counted the cost of coming to Christ?

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it, lest after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'" (Luke 14:28-30).

Before we begin building our towers of life in Christ, we are highly recommended to first sit down and count the true cost. We need to know what we're getting into. Are we willing to pay the price demanded for so great a calling? There can be no cakewalks, no shortcuts, not one ounce of world in the deal.

"So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

Behold, the greatest price ever offered anywhere, at anytime in history! God is asking for everything you have. It is not merely enough to claim Christ; Christ must claim you because you belong to Him. But Christ will never claim you by force; He claims us when we willfully surrender our very beings and take up His purpose and plan for our lives. The price we pay is the sacrificial offering of our lives to His sovereign service forever. Every potential follower of Christ must be informed of this. There are already too many abandoned, incomplete towers in the church today!

The costs of coming to Christ are indeed great and painful! Expensive! God is not cheap, our salvation was not cheap, and likewise the price for becoming molded into the image of Jesus Christ is not cheap. Only a naive fool rushes in to build a structure without checking first to see whether or not funds are available to purchase supplies. Because of this, many towers are washed away like sandcastles on a beach when God allows Satan to send the ocean waves of tribulation.

I have learned this: All costs for coming to Christ are paid for by our daily obedience to His Word.

God's bills must be paid or corrective action will be taken. If you refuse to pay rent, the landlord evicts you. If you refuse to pay a car note, the creditor repossesses the automobile. Now, God will never deny or evict us from His love, but He can and will repo His anointing and peace and joy and comfort from your spirit if you fail to pay what's required. This is why we have so many miserable Christians in the church today. They've stopped paying the price for following Jesus, they've stopped dying on the cross, they've merged in with the world, they've looked back from the plow, they've returned to whore themselves to secular entertainment, and God's overdue bills continue to pile up. Do you really expect God to bless this delinquency with a spirit of peace and joy?

"These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 17:33).

We are assured of troubles, we are promised hard times! It is therefore my prayer that our towers remain standing in the midst of the storm. We must fortify the walls through our obedience in our daily walk with Jesus. When God's postal service of the Holy Spirit sends you a bill of conviction, pay the Master with your obedience. Pay it according to His Word, regardless of the cost! God will never send a bill you can't pay. As you pay, you build the tower, and the more you build, the stronger you become in God.

If you feel as though you're missing out on the joy of the Lord, could it be that you have a stack of unpaid bills piling up on your spiritual table? May the Lord open our eyes to the truth of fellowship with Him through obedience in the Holy Ghost. There is no other way to live in Christ and reap the joy of God but through trust and obedience. I pray God open all our eyes to this simple and fundamental truth! Amen.

**Re: Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west - posted by ReviveUsLord, on: 2007/8/10 15:27**

Quote:  
-----When Jesus said we must bear our crosses, He didn't mean on gold necklaces or as tattoos. Indeed, there is an enormous price to be paid on a cross! The cross symbolizes forgiveness, but it also symbolizes pain, rejection and death. For the apostle Paul, the cross was the death sentence to his flesh, **and likewise for me, the cross is the complete annihilation of the flesh and all self-centered motives, dreams, ambitions and desires that are contrary to the plan and purpose God has for my life.**  
-----

Quote:  
-----"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19).

Ah, yes. The honor of being hated by the entire world! Only the school of Jesus Christ can offer this. Jesus Himself chooses the sheep out of the world

and promises them the ultimate tuition price: world hatred. Did I say being a Christian is expensive? It will cost you the world and everything in it! How many are willing to pay this price! Jesus said that many try but few would actually succeed; many start to build, but few actually complete the tower.

How precious is the pearl of Jesus Christ to you? Are you willing to pay anything and everything for it? Would you pay for it with your own blood? With your family's blood? Would you forsake the world and all its gold and music and media and sensualities for a wooden cross of self-denial and a lifetime of rejection and warring against the flesh? Have you counted the cost of coming to Christ?

Great article! Thank you brother for stating it so clearly, so directly, it is such needed message indeed..that we may really not only come to the cross, but get on it, grasp all its reality, demands on us, cost, so that we may be able to see and experience the ultimate blessedness of it.

**Re: Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2007/8/10 16:50**

Quote:

-----When was the last time we really evaluated the cost of following Jesus as indicated from the scriptures?

Quote:

-----Behold, the greatest price ever offered anywhere, at anytime in history! God is asking for everything you have. It is not merely enough to claim Christ; Christ must claim you because you belong to Him. But Christ will never claim you by force; He claims us when we willfully surrender our very beings and take up His purpose and plan for our lives. The price we pay is the sacrificial offering of our lives to His sovereign service forever. Every potential follower of Christ must be informed of this. There are already too many abandoned, incomplete towers in the church today!

Thanks for this message. It is very timely for me.

Wondering .....is this written by our own PaulWest?

Danielle

**Re: Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/8/10 16:57**

very good word, many many things spinning in my head, maybe will post later on them when they fall into place...but what i came to think about was a quote from Art Katz, dont remember exactly but something like

"the greatest scandal of American Christianity is the lack of persecution"

and this line i believe is true in many peoples lifes, and probably my own to,

**could it be that you have a stack of unpaid bills piling up on your spiritual table?**

!...!

**Re: Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west, on: 2007/8/10 17:22**

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it, lest after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'" (Luke 14:28-30).

moe\_mac wrote:

In our local church about a year ago in a business meeting. The building committee, and let me first say, I don't think committees such as what these consist of are scriptural. Anyway the committee recommended to the church body to go ahead with a fellowship hall construction that had been on hold for 7 years. The meeting was open for comment and discussion. I could not believe my ears when this person read the above scripture about counting the cost and did read the punch line and the idea behind the whole passage. The church did not have enough money in the bank, without borrowing

more money. I'm thinking as they read this, and give her disapproval of going ahead with construction, is all you see in this passage, you can't see the forest for the trees. I manage to keep my mouth shut, which is unusual. The discussion ended in the church members present voting with a yea or a nay on the go ahead with the project, in secret ballot. Anyway the point I was making is how we read passages sometimes and miss the whole gist of what God is conveying. If we aren't willing to give it all, we can't be HIS disciples. If he is not Lord of all, he is not Lord at all. Thanks for the great post in truth.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/8/10 21:46

Quote:

-----Wondering .....is this written by our own PaulWest?  
-----

Actually...yes. Many moons ago, as they say.

Blessings in the Lord,

Brother Paul

Re: Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west - posted by Tears\_of\_joy, on: 2007/12/6 11:12

Questions that need to be answered from the article:

In fact, being a true, born again follower of Jesus Christ will cost you everything.

Is God behind this massive reduction in costs, or is Christianity instead being sold by independent merchants ignorant of the true cost?

When was the last time we really evaluated the cost of following Jesus as indicated from the scriptures?

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

How often do we inform sinners of this verse before we lead them into a prayer of reconciliation?

If you've read the four gospels you've noticed that the promises of the Lord have conditionals frequently attached to them: "**If**" you abide in me; "**If**" you keep my commandments. Pay close attention to the word "**if**" in the words of Christ. We will benefit more from meditating on this little word than we will on anything else, because the keys to receiving the blessings of obedience are contained within it. Luke 14:26 says to me, "Paul, if you can't put me above your biological father and wife and children and make me the only true source of joy and lordship in your life, then you can not afford to be my disciple."

Jesus was so politically incorrect that He caused riots and divisions wherever He went!

When Jesus said we must bear our crosses, He didn't mean on gold necklaces or as tattoos. Indeed, there is an enormous **price** to be paid on a cross!

The church of today would do good to wake up and realize there are no bargain prices, no haggling with God! His prices are set in incorruptible stone forever.

And coming to Jesus is easy, (if God grants repentance), but it's staying with Jesus that **counts**!

Ah, yes. The honor of being hated by the entire world! Only the school of Jesus Christ can offer this. Jesus Himself chooses the sheep out of the world and promises them the ultimate tuition price: world hatred. Did I say being a Christian is expensive?

How precious is the pearl of Jesus Christ to you?

Are you willing to pay anything and everything for it?

Would you pay for it with your own blood? With your family's blood?

Would you forsake the world and all its gold and music and media and sensualities for a wooden cross of self-denial and a lifetime of rejection and warring against the flesh?

Have you counted **the cost** of coming to Christ?

If you feel as though you're missing out on the joy of the Lord, could it be that you have a stack of unpaid bills piling up on your spiritual table?

Preach brother!

**Re: Counting the Cost of Coming to Christ -west - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2007/12/19 22:40**

Brother Paul, I have been truly blessed and greatly inspired to self-denial, sacrifice, and surrender for the cause of Christ. Thanks for posting this anointed message!! :-D

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/12/20 1:27**

Quote:

-----Brother Paul, I have been truly blessed and greatly inspired to self-denial, sacrifice, and surrender for the cause of Christ  
-----

Dear brother, thank you for this confession. It's an incredible honor to be used of God like this. May your good fruit abound more and more. The Lord will deeply honor what you give Him in way of self-denial, sacrifice and surrender; He will honor it a hundredfold.

Brother Paul